

## *Wisconsin Folks: Masters of Tradition*



Wade Fernandez Sr. (Wiciwen Apis-Mahwaew) is an enrolled member of the Menominee Nation, born on the Menominee Reservation in 1968. He resides in Keshena with his wife and five children.

Wade started his first band when he was 11 years old. Over the years, he has developed his skills as a guitarist, vocalist, songwriter, producer, and Native flute musician. He typically combines all of these aspects in his performances and recordings. He has been honored with many awards

including the 2006 Best Male Artist of the Year from the Native American Music Awards (NAMMY).

The Native American flute has been with the Menominee and other Woodland Native nations for many generations. Wade values it as an important part of Menominee cultural expression.

Wade is a music educator by avocation and by training. Even before his degree in music education, he was teaching traditional and contemporary music performance and expression to others. He has taught Native flute, guitar, bass, and rock band on the Menominee reservation for many years at community centers, tribal school, high school, and out of his home.

Wade's apprentices may have been 13 years old but he saw them as "developing artists who are carrying on a very important tradition." He taught them specific advanced techniques for the Native flute such as flutter tonguing, trilling, phrasing, improvisation, and composition. He also emphasized contextual knowledge. "They need to learn more of the cultural aspects, including the humility that comes with performing on the instrument."

Wade and his apprentices met 2-3 times each week. Bart Basina, Jory Gladue and Naeciwat Latender learned through stories, performance, and lots of practice. "I learned how much fun it is to be a performer but also how much work it is," reflected Naeciwat. They, along with Wade's other apprentices, performed both individually and collectively at pow-wows, churches, recording studios, and in Milwaukee at the National Indian Education Association conference.

Their final performance was at Wade's annual "4 the People" community concert held in Keshena. Each student performed individually accompanied by Wade and his Black Wolf Band. Part of the live performance is on the final CD they recorded, along with tracks by each apprentice performing a piece they composed. For Jory, the apprenticeship "helped me to understand to be proud of who I am and what we do."

*"As a musician, I believe that the music you play is a direct reflection of your ancestors, your environment, your community, and our creator. They are your teachers and by sharing it and teaching it you honor all of them."*